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Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 9th St., Suite 1155
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Dear Lester,

The purpose of this letter is to offer comments on the Workshop 7 packet in addition to those covered in my June 15 letter. My continuing comments should not obscure the fact that I believe we are evolving in the right direction in respect to the approach to development of alternatives.

My comments fall into two categories. First, statements in the packet that require some elaboration and in order to clarify applicability, technical soundness, etc., and in order to provide clearer explanations of benefits and impacts. And, second, areas where I am still critical of what is or is not included.

1. In regard to returning tidal water to leveed lands, what lands are these; what land elevations are involved; what will be the cost in loss of agriculture, in increased evaporation of water, and in levee risks; and how does it relate to the concentration of dissolved carbon compounds in Delta channels? If we cannot answer these questions now, we should at least indicate the need for answers.

2. What are the answers to the same questions regarding the proposed substantial conversion of agricultural land to wetlands?

3. What subsidence and levee stability risks are associated with the proposed levee setbacks?

4. In Alternative 3, where would the proposed possible "spur lines" be connected to what districts? How would this alternative have an alleged potential for increasing San Joaquin River flow and why is the potential limited to this alternative: Why is it stated only that this alternative "could" degrade Delta water salinity? How is it proposed that this alternative may restore flow in tributaries? Why is this alternative claimed to be better for use of "conserved" water; what water and under what circumstances, and why unique to this alternative?

5. I continue to believe that it is disingenuous to combine two very different actions under the heading of "water use efficiency". There can be few objections to making efficient use of water in its application to a given purpose of use. But we are playing God when we decide that water should be reallocated

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for a different use by land fallowing, "land use conversion", etc. The proposal continues to propose reallocation of 1 to 2 MAF/yr in this manner.

6. The applicability of EWMPs to the diverse situations in agriculture is very complex, and the pending resolution of AB3616 is, therefore, designed to be on a voluntary basis even though it is expected to be adopted by most large water districts. The CALFED is not qualified to design and adopt additional EWMPs. Furthermore, talk of making them mandatory could put the whole concept in jeopardy.

7. I also continue to object to lumping under the term "pollutant" everything from bromine to nitrates to selenium to boron to salinity to dissolved carbon compounds to urban storm drainage and to herbicides. The sources and solutions are different. The purposes of water use for which these compounds are detrimental or beneficial also differ. If we focus on them separately, we can use different corrective solutions. For example, the urban water treaters can tolerate more dissolved carbon compounds (which are part of the aquatic food chain) if we can reduce the bromine which originates largely from Bay water. The bromine in export water can be reduced even in a through Delta alternative. There are less expensive ways to correct the river salinity problem than building an isolated conveyance. Furthermore, correcting the salinity problem will correct the boron problem and help correct the selenium problem.

8. All alternatives should deal fully with the salinity problem in the San Joaquin valley. The problem is fundamental to the State's continuing production of food and fiber. Correcting the salinity problem in the San Joaquin River is not highly expensive and can and should be included in every alternative. There must also be a system of disposing of the salt that is imported into the south Central Valley as a result of the delivery of Delta water. This is important to the long range interest of the entire State and is probably not as expensive as building an isolated Delta transfer facility.

9. As regards the rush to make it easier to reallocate water by such measures as letting sellers decide whether there are impacts on other parties, we will soon send you a critique of the proposed Model Water Transfer Act that was distributed at the last BDAC meeting.

10. It is misleading to call alternative 3 a Dual Delta Conveyance and then include an isolated component that is capable of operating as a full isolated facility at least much of the time. There is no operating plan included and no assurance mechanism to justify the statement that it "preserves some continued diversion from the common pool".

11. It is a mistake to look only at offstream surface water storage. Onstream storage usually has more potential for multiple use of the yield and does not always flood more sensitive terrain. For example, raising Friant Dam would provide a substantial yield and reduce serious flood damage. The use of this yield would improve water quality, contribute fishery benefits, augment water supply, and reduce the need to transfer water across the Delta.

12. Acquisition of environmental water from San Joaquin tributaries should not be included unless and until it is demonstrated that this will either be limited to new water yield or limited to reductions in water consumption (not just water application) and that there will be no downstream impacts such as by reduction of summer return flows. There is already insufficient summer flow in the mainstem of the river and the South Delta to protect riparian diversion rights, provide for consumptive public trust uses, and protect resident fishery., and the summer flow is largely return flow. I have not heard of any specific acquisition proposal that would not impact these needs.

13. CALFED proposals for water management should comply with California water law including the Delta Protection Statutes, Area of Origin statutes, and the priorities among water rights. Superior water rights, such as those on tributaries, should not be impacted to avoid impacting inferior water rights, such as those held by the CVP and SWP. The CVP, in particular, must mitigate its own impacts on San Joaquin River flow and quality, to the extent necessary, without impacting superior water rights. The CVP is almost solely responsible for the increase in salinity in the San Joaquin River (Refer to June 1980 joint technical report by USBR and SDWA). The CVP is also responsible for the reduction in Vernalis flow caused by exports from Friant (Refer to same report and to an exhibit distributed by the SWRCB at its June 11, 1996 workshop). The drainage basin above Friant provided 27 to 50% of the average pre-CVP flow at Vernalis during the irrigation season. The unimpaired flow of that basin is about 30% of the unimpaired flow of the entire San Joaquin River watershed, but it now only contributes to river flow beyond Gravelly Ford during flood releases.

I regret the length of this letter but feel that all of these topics must be addressed.

Sincerely,

Alex Hildebrand

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